

Hobbies

U.S. offers discounts and free signature cards to spur Olympic coin sales

By Roger Boye

Uncle Sam is offering free signature cards and special price discounts to spur sales of its 1992 Olympic coins.

The cards—each autographed by an athlete who hopes to make the U.S. Olympic team—will be given to some of the people who buy Olympic coin sets.

"We have in excess of one-quarter million cards," said U.S. Mint spokesperson Hamilton

Dix. "They'll go out on a random basis while supplies last."

Each card states that the autograph serves as a reminder that "a portion of the proceeds from your [coin] purchase goes directly to the United States Olympic Team." Uncle Sam never before has offered such cards in a commemorative coin program.

Dix added that all signatures are original and authentic, and that the government will not entertain requests for exchanges.

The cards will be included with many of the two- and three-coin Olympic proof sets and six-coin Olympic sets.

Some hobbyists believe that the cards themselves might become collectible someday, especially if signed by an athlete who wins an Olympic gold medal. Certain baseball cards bearing original autographs of all-stars are prized in the marketplace.

The U.S. Mint will make three types of Olympic coins this

year—a copper-nickel half dollar, silver dollar and gold coin with .24 of an ounce of precious metal—to mark U.S. participation in the 1992 Olympic Games. Officials selected coin designs last year in a national competition.

Collectors whose orders are postmarked no later than Feb. 28 receive pre-issue price discounts ranging from \$1 on a proof half dollar (\$8.50 versus \$9.50 after Feb. 28) to \$50 on a set of three proof coins and three uncircu-

lated coins (\$445 versus \$495).

Signature cards will be included with some of the \$445 six-coin sets and with some two- and three-coin proof sets. The two-coin set with a half dollar and silver dollar costs \$35 through Feb. 28, and the three-coin set—with a half dollar, silver dollar and gold piece—costs \$225.

For more information about 1992 Olympic coins, or to place an order, call, toll free, 1-800-572-TEAM.